Come on Barbie, Let's go... Shopping by brokenpromisesandhope

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Nancy takes El and Max to the mall.

Come on Barbie, Let's go... Shopping

Author's Note:

> Hey friends,
> WE NEED MORE GIRLS BEING FRIENDS. NANCY WANTS TO BE A BIG SISTER.
> I LOVE NANCY.
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“She’s not gonna take us,” Max says snottily, even as she follows alongside El.

“Why not?” El asks.

“Cause she’s Nancy,” Max says with a roll of her eyes.

“But she has a car,” says El.

“That doesn’t mean she’s willing to drive us around.”

The two girls quickly approach the Wheeler residence and El knocks on the door lightly. Nancy opens the door, looking rather plain in a white tank top and cutoff jean shorts,

“Hey girls. Um, Mike’s not here right now,” she trails off confused.

“We came to see you,” El says.

Nancy looks at them curiously, before opening the door wider so the two girls can slip in,

“Okay, what’s going on?”

“We wanna go to the mall,” El says excitedly.

Nancy looks at Max, who has the decency to blush,
“Right now?”

“Yeah! Hopper gave me some money! I can buy you an ice cream!” El

says.

Nancy laughs,
“You don’t need to buy me an ice cream hon. At least let me fill in my eyebrows and we can go,” she turns around and heads upstairs and El nudges Max, a big smile on her face,

“Told you.”

Nancy drives a red Jetta and listens to Cyndi Lauper. The ride is quite long and El doesn’t shut up the entire time. She’s talking about all the stores she wants to go to. She wants a new rainbow t-shirt and her and Max are going to get some scrunchies. Nancy pulls up to the door, ready to let the girls out and El stops,
“Wait! You can’t leave us alone!”

“Why not?” Nancy asks.

“The rules says that we have to have an adult.”

“Alright, I’ll go park and meet you in there then.”

“Really?” Asks Max, shocked.

“Well duh. I wanna go shopping anyway. I’ve got to find an outfit for the first day of school.”

El and Max hop out of the car and wait on the corner for Nancy,

“Told you,” El says singsong.

“Shut up.”

“I don’t know why you don’t like her. She’s nice. And pretty.”

Max wrinkles her nose,
“She’s Nancy Wheeler. Just because she saved our lives doesn’t mean we gotta be her best friend or any of that bullshit.”

“But she’s very-”

“Look El, we don’t need anyone to play big sister to and pity us, and

certainly not Nancy ‘the slut’ Wheeler,” Max snaps, frustrated with the younger girl’s naive attitude.

El stares at her wide-eyed and Max realizes she may have been a bit harsh, but then she turns around and sees Nancy standing behind her, cheeks pink. She had barely gotten ready, just literally filled in her eyebrows as she promised, not trying to impress anyone. Max feels bad, she does, because Nancy kinda looks like she’s been kicked, and she presses her lips together,

“Um, I won’t intrude. I’ll just meet you guys in the food court in like an hour.”

Before Max, or El can say anything, she’s gone. Max feels El’s eyes on her and she sighs. Swallows hard, because she is not used to apologizing. No one ever does in her house. And she’s certainly not apologizing. Not to Nancy Wheeler. She’s just not. By the time El sees the Claire’s, the first store she’d wanted to go to, she’s over looking at Max with her big puppy dog eyes, and is shopping.

El is fun. Innocent in a way Max wishes she still was. She likes everything glittery, and pink and fun. Max wishes she could buy her everything she touches, because she seems so excited about literally everything. She gets the feeling that they won’t be getting very far in the mall with El getting so excited over everything, and no matter how much money Hopper gave her, it won’t be enough for El to satisfy the need for every single item.

Finally El settles on a decision, a pack of three scrunchies, a glittery stuffed penguin, and best friend necklaces for the two of them. The two of them head across the mall to find other stores to shop at and El is extremely disappointed when Max admits it’s been about an hour. They make their way to the food court and see Nancy sitting alone at a table, two bags beside her.

El runs up to her of course,
“Nancy, Nancy! Wanna see what we got?!”

“Of course I do!” Nancy says, putting her bags on the floor so the two girls can sit down.

El shows her stuffed animal, after scrunchie, after t-shirt, she'd even found a pair of tie dye leggings,
"Isn't it all so cute?!" El all but squeals.

"So cute. You girls like the mall?"

"Yes!" says El, "can we get some ice cream Nancy?"

"Of course, I'll wait here."

"No, you need some too!"

"El, you don't have to buy me anything."

"No, Hopper said. So what kind do you want?"
Nancy tucks a lock of hair behind her ear,
"Chocolate with oreo please."

"Max?" El asks.

"Vanilla with strawberries."

El wrinkles her nose, but bounces up to the row of food places. Nancy picks at her nails in awkward silence and Max fiddles with the necklace that her and El had that was matching. It wasn't that Nancy was a bad person, it wasn't. And yes, she'd sounded super bitchy, but, that's how life worked. She felt bad, but it wasn't that Nancy didn't know people still thought that about her. It's not that there wasn't some sense of sympathy about what had happened to Barb, but that passed, like everything else. Will was still called zombie boy, despite the death of his mom's boyfriend, Bob, and Nancy was still called a slut around school. High schoolers lack of empathy was astounding.

Soon enough El bounces back to the table,

"They said they'd bring it to us when it's ready. Nancy can I put a pony in your hair?" She asks, holding up the pack of scrunchies.

"Yeah, but don't you wanna keep those for yourself?" She asks.

El is already out of her chair, yanking one of the scrunchies off of the plastic backing,

“Uh, no. There’s one for each of us,” she says in a duh tone.

Her hands are suddenly in Nancy’s hair, playing with it, and gently tugging the curls back into the scrunchie. She freezes when she sees Steve Harrington walking up, in a ridiculous looking sailor’s costume, carrying a tray of ice cream treats. He looks just as shocked to see her, and she realizes that her hair has been pulled into a messy, tiny ponytail, about half of her new short hair cut, falling out the back, El standing behind her, her hands braced on Nancy’s shoulders.

She has on no eye makeup, and she’s wearing one of Mike’s old t-shirts she’d cut into a tank top, when she was going through her artsy phase and.. Here is Steve Harrington. She suddenly can’t breathe and he sets the tray down, looking as sheepish as her,

“Hey girls. Nancy.”

She nods, mouth dry and El says hello. She can feel Max’s eyes on her as she decidedly does not reach for her plastic cup of ice cream the way the other two do.

“Nancy, can we talk?” Steve asks, shoving his hands in the pocket of his uniform and rocking back and forth on his heels.

“No,” Nancy forces out, voice raspy.

Steve frowns, takes his hand out of his pocket and leans forward almost as if he’s going to touch her. She visibly tenses and he bites his bottom lip,
“Please, Nance, come on.”

And Max is young but she knows that voice. Her step father has the exact same one. I’m sorry. I wanna make it better. I didn’t mean to hurt you. I didn’t mean to bash your fucking head into the wall. I’m so sorry. I love you. Until I want to do it again. She doesn’t know what to do. El’s just watching, eating her ice cream, because El is innocent, El doesn’t know anything that’s going on, and Max wants to keep it that way. Intends to keep it that way until Steve actually touches Nancy. His fingers brushing against her neck as he rests his hand on her shoulder to say,
“Nance, ba-”

“Get your hands off of her,” Max says harshly.

Steve’s hand snaps back and three pairs of eyes fall on her. She squares her shoulders,
“She said she doesn’t want to talk.”

“Look Max, this is-”

“If you say adult business, I will legit punch you in the face.”

Steve looks over at Nancy, who’s finally stood up, and grabbed her bags,
“Girls, grab your stuff, let’s finish this at my place, huh?”

El grabs the three ice creams and Nancy sidesteps Steve, whose hand still reaches out to try to touch her. Thankfully she’s staring very forcefully ahead, hand resting on El’s back. Steve’s face drops and he stares at Max.

She can feel her face heating up and her palms are sweaty, and it really is none of her business, she’d just referred to Nancy as a slut earlier, the girl had literally driven her across town and Max hadn’t even wanted to be seen with her. The guilt makes her stomach churn,
“Don’t you ever call that girl again,” she says firmly.

“What does it matter to you?” Steve asks.

He doesn’t ask mean, because Steve isn’t mean. Max doesn’t think he has cruel intentions, but that doesn’t matter. It didn’t matter to Nancy who’d nearly started shaking when he’d approached her. Steve was trying to be a good guy, he was. He coached the boy’s little league baseball team. The team everyone but Mike was on. For a reason.

“What you did for me with Billy,” she starts, looking up into his brown eyes, “that’s what I’m doing for her. Do not contact her again.”

Steve tenses at the thought, he doesn’t, the thing with Nancy was, he just sighs,
“Will you tell her that I’m sorry?”

Max assess his face. He looks tired. His hair flattened under the idiotic sailor’s cap, the bags under his eyes, the stubble on his cheeks.

His brown eyes look tired, lips chapped.

“No,” she says, because sorry doesn’t mean a goddamn thing. She turns to catch up with El and Nancy.

El had given Nancy her ice cream, and her own is gone, she’s holding Max’s,

“Hey Nancy?” Max asks as El opens the door for them.

“Yeah?” She asks, as Max takes a huge bite of her melting ice cream.

“Can we go back to your house and you can show us what you got too?” She gestures to the bags in her hand.

Nancy’s face is still as pink as the scrunchie in her hair, but she gropes in her purse to grab the keys to her car with one hand, and takes a delicate bite of her ice cream with her other,
“Yeah I’d love that.”

“Me too,” says Max seriously.